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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

JANUARY 9, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for January 9, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

#### POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. SEVENTY-FIVE DIE IN PLANE CRASH IN DIYARBAKIR (All papers) An RJ 100-type plane that left Istanbul at 6:15 p.m. for Diyarbakir with 75 passengers and five crew members aboard crashed near a military zone five kilometers away from the Diyarbakir Airport at 8:15 p.m. on the same day. Seventy-five people, including six foreigners, three babies, two pilots and three crew members, died, while five people thrown out at the time of the crash escaped the crash with injuries. (Note: One Amcit was among the dead. Ankara reporting septel.) After the crash, which was attributed to "intense fog", soldiers encircled the crash site. After falling, the plane fell apart, followed by explosions. Bodies are reported to be in an unrecognizable state due to burns. Experts pointed to the lack of an Instrument Landing System (ILS) at the airport. This system cannot be installed at the airport, as Diyarbakir is a military area. There were no flights to Diyarbakir for the past week due to fog. Transportation Minister Binai Yildirim left for Diyarbakir, taking corpse bags with him. Regarding the crash, Prime Minister Abdullah Gul said there was not the possibility of terror. "Most probably, the weather conditions had an effect," he added. Hurrriyet reported a DNA test will be conducted unless relatives recognize the victims. Bodies of identified victims will be handed over to their families.

3. CRITICISM OF POSSIBLE U.S. OPERATION IN VARIOUS AREAS OF THE SOUTHEAST Evrensel reported increased criticism of the possible U.S. operation against Iraq in Gaziantep and Adana, the two provinces that were mostly affected during the 1991 Gulf Crisis. The Gaziantep Labor Platform decided to stage an anti-war rally to protest U.S. war preparations and the (Turkish) government's attitude toward this war. In Adana, Belma Cingillioglu of the Labor Party (EMEP) held a press conference in front of the EMEP office in which she said 90% of the public wanted Incirlik (Adana) Air Base and other bases closed. Human Rights Association (HRA) and Public Training Center (Halkevi) officials supported the press conference. Local journalists in Mersin, whose port might be used during such an operation, said they do not want to publish news articles on the destruction to be caused by this Iraq war. Mersin Chamber of Commerce and Industry Acting President Serdal Kuyucuoglu warned that the province's economy would never be able to recover if its port were used in such a war. Hurriyet reported that the representatives of 15 Mersin professional associations, all affiliated with the Turkish Union of Architects and Engineers Chambers (TMMOB), issued a declaration saying they do not want war. Sabah reported that attorneys from bar associations throughout Turkey issued an anti-war declaration saying that "Turkey has neither a single child nor a penny to sacrifice for oil and arms monopolies".

4. BATMAN ANTI-WAR RALLY SET FOR JANUARY 19 (Evrensel) In a January 7 press conference, the Batman Peace Platform announced it would start anti-war activities through a rally on January 19. Nearly 500 people attended the press conference, which was supported by democratic mass organizations and labor unions. Sadi Ozdemir, President of the Batman chapter of the Human Rights Association (HRA), said Turkey's involvement in a possible war in Iraq would bring nothing but hunger, poverty and tears.

15. BLACKOUT INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO GAS STATIONS (Evrensel) The Turkish Petroleum Refineries Corporation's (TUPRAS) Batman Refinery has given blackout instructions to all gas stations along the Iraqi border in order to protect the pipeline carrying Iraqi oil. The paper points to increased activity across the Southeast as preparations continue toward a possible U.S. war in Iraq.

16. ADANA AIRPORT WILL RESUME OPERATION (Bolge) The State Airports Administration (DHMI) senior director, Cengiz Asikli, stressed that the Adana Airport would re-open to flights beginning on January 15, despite a delay in the completion of its repair and maintenance project due to weather conditions. The airport was closed to flights on November 4 for repair and maintenance.

17. YSK PRESIDENT CRITICIZES KANADOGLU FOR HIS STATEMENT (Hurriyet/Sabah/Cumhuriyet) In an answer to a journalist's question regarding Supreme Court Chief Prosecutor Sabih Kanadoglu's statement that AK Party leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan could not run in the Siirt elections, Tufan Algan, President of the Higher Election Council (YSK), reacted negatively. "If the president of every institution goes out and expresses his opinion, this will only disrupt the State and confuse heads," he said. Algan first characterized Kanadoglu's statement as "his political thought" and then as "his own opinion".

18. ALLEGATIONS THAT STATE OF EMERGENCY PRACTICES CONTINUE (Sabah/Cumhuriyet) On January 8, NGO's from Southeastern Turkey briefed the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission, which is preparing to travel to inspect the situation in the Southeast after the State of Emergency's (OHAL) abolition. "Current problems still continue despite partial improvements following the lifting of OHAL," they claimed. Fusun Sayek of the Turkish Physicians Chamber (TTB) said, "Health services in the region are far from the humanitarian level", while the Association for the Oppressed (MAZLUM-DER) national president, Yilmaz Ensaroglu, claimed there were no changes in such issues as the village guard system, the Village Return Project, and (use of) Kurdish names. Human Rights Association (HRA) Vice National President Yusuf Alatas noted that public officials viewed OHAL as normal.

19. ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTEST (Bolge) The Adana chapter of the Egitim-Sen teachers union staged a January 7 march from the city hall to the AK Party provincial office to protest the Government's decision to repay employees for mandatory payroll deductions only on a long-term basis. Protestors shouted anti-government slogans despite police warnings. State Employees' Union Confederation (KESK)-affiliated labor unions and such political parties as the Republican People's Party (CHP), the Freedom and Solidarity Party (ODP) and the Labor Party (EMEP) gave support by participating in the march. The Egitim-Sen Adana organization issued a press release claiming that, during the march, some security units had threatened to arrest and "exile" (i.e., "transfer") the chapter president. The organization condemned what it called "verbal assault".

110. HIZBULLAH AND KADEK (PKK) SUSPECTS HELD (Turkiye/Milli Gazete/Cumhuriyet/Evrensel) Diyarbakir police arrested a total of 19 suspects during an anti-Hizbullah and anti-KADEK (PKK) operation on January 8. The arrestees included ten Hizbullah suspects accused of "political organizing, fund-raising activities, and extortion", as well as nine people suspected of "logistical support and recruitment for KADEK". Following interrogation, the arrestees were arraigned in a local court where six Hizbullah and six KADEK suspects were ordered to remain in custody.

111. SIRNAK CHECKPOINTS REMOVED (Evrensel) Checkpoints, a State of Emergency

(OHAL) practice, on the Sirnak-Diyarbakir highway have been removed, with OHAL having been abolished in Sirnak on November 30. Previously, non-residents of Sirnak reportedly had to come up with "a very good reason" to enter the province.

#### 12. COLLEGE STUDENTS UNDER INVESTIGATION

(Evrensel) The Mustafa Kemal University (Hatay) Rector's Office launched an investigation against eight students who issued a mid-December press release to support the "I Want My University Initiative" started by Dicle University (Diyarbakir) students.

#### 13. DIYARBAKIR CHURCH ROBBED

(Turkiye) Unidentified persons broke into the 1,700-year-old Meryem Ana Syriac Christian Church in Diyarbakir on January 8, stealing three 300-year-old silver-plated crosses and a painting of the Virgin Mary). An investigation is underway.

#### 14. LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS ACCUSED OF EMBEZZLEMENT

(Turkiye) Based on reports by Agricultural and Village Affairs Ministry inspectors, the Kiziltepe (Mardin) Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against 2,000 people, including deputy governors, district governors, department heads and farmers. These people's assets and property had been confiscated for having embezzled USD 200,000 each within the framework of Direct Income Support (DIS) payments. Also, in Malazgirt (Mus), an investigation is underway against nine village chiefs and two public employees for fraudulent declarations to receive DIS payments.

#### 15. EVRENSEL REPORTS WOUNDED SMUGGLER WAS ABANDONED TO DIE

(Evrensel) In his testimony at the Saray (Van) Prosecutor's Office, Saray resident Bilal Gozupek said soldiers had opened fire on him and his brother Isa Gozupek near the Iranian border on their way back to Turkey. Bilal claimed soldiers wounded Isa and left him to die from bleeding. Isa alleged soldiers had fired on them without ordering them to halt first.

#### 16. WEAPONS SMUGGLERS ARRESTED IN ELAZIG

(Turkiye) Elazig Jandarma seized two Russian-made Kalashnikov rifles, five pistols and a large quantity of cartridges in Sivrice township. Three people were arrested in connection with the seizure.

#### 17. PRESS COUNCIL CONDEMNNS ASSAULT ON A VAN NEWSPAPER

(Evrensel) The Press Council denounced an attack against Van's Prestij Newspaper office. The attack was presumed to be for the paper's reporting on coffeehouses running computer game centers that play pornographic films. Mostly school-age children were reportedly going to those centers. Gokalp Yazir of the council called for deterrent policies against perpetrators of such assaults.

#### 18. RETIRED JUDGE CHARGES PRESSURE IN CASES AGAINST DURAK

(Milliyet/Hurriyet) In a January 8 press conference, Retired judge Musa Ufuktepe said he believed Adana Mayor Aytac Durak, who faces a "Where did you get it from?" case, will be convicted, as he believes Durak's political pressure elements have now been eliminated. Ufuktepe added he had served on the panel of judges handling previous cases against Durak and while doing so had encountered political pressure. He accused Durak of having used his political influence to force the judiciary to reach a verdict in his favor. "Under law number 3628, Durak and his relatives' assets and property must be confiscated," he continued. Durak's attorney, Necil Topuz, held a press conference in which he criticized Ufuktepe, saying "He is the last person who should talk about Durak."

#### 19. HAKKARI VILLAGE GUARD NOW A BEGGER

(Evrensel) Fifty-five-year-old Ismail Isilak, father of four children, lost a leg when he stepped on a landmine during a 1994 anti-PKK operation in

which he participated.  
Isilak sued the Interior Ministry for indemnity,  
but was refused. He was later dismissed for  
"assisting and abetting the PKK." He is now  
begging for a living.

#### ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

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120. ADANA EXPORTS TO LIBYA  
(Hurriyet/Bolge) Kambeton, a major Adana-based  
firm engaged in ready-to-use cement industry, began  
to export concrete and reinforced pipes to Libya.  
The pipes shipped from the Mersin Port will be used  
for rainwater and sewage systems in Tripoli  
province's Wafacoastal construction site.  
Kambeton's Marketing Director said ties had been  
established to continue exports in the future as  
well.

121. CLA SIGNED AT CUKOBIRLIK  
(Hurriyet/Turkiye) Adana's Agricultural Complex  
Cukobirlik and the Tekstil-Is labor union,  
affiliated with the Confederation of the  
Revolutionary Workers' Unions (DISK), signed a  
collective labor agreement (CLA) that foresees a  
24% wage increase and 100% increase in fringe  
benefits for Cukobirlik's 1,112workers. The new  
CLA covers the period between August 1, 2002 and  
July 31, 2003.  
HOLTZ